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**HUMAN ELEMENT PRINCIPLES FOR THE WORK OF THE MARITIME SAFETY
COMMITTEE, THE MARINE ENVIRONMENT PROTECTION COMMITTEE
AND THEIR SUBSIDIARY BODIES**

1 The Maritime Safety Committee, at its sixty-sixth session (28 May to 6 June 1996), and the Marine Environment Protection Committee, at its thirty-eighth session (1 to 10 July 1996), agreed to develop, in the near future, a strategic plan for addressing human element issues. The Committee agreed that in order to develop such a strategic plan a set of human element principles and goals should be developed as a first step which will provide a guiding philosophy that Administrations and the maritime community can use effectively to address human element issues.

2 The attached annex contains the human element principles to direct the work of the Maritime Safety Committee, the Marine Environment Protection Committee and their subsidiary bodies. These principles should be applied in conjunction with MSC/Circ.680 and MEPC/Circ.297 dealing with the method of work of the Maritime Safety Committee and the Marine Environment Protection Committee, respectively.

3 Member Governments are invited to bring the attached human element principles to the attention of all parties concerned.

ANNEX

HUMAN ELEMENT PRINCIPLES FOR THE WORK OF THE ORGANIZATION

Introduction

The purpose of this circular is to direct the work of the Committees and their subsidiary bodies regarding the human element principles to be taken into account when endorsing or approving standards or procedures.

These principles represent the first step in the development of a strategic plan to ensure that the Organization adequately addresses the human element to prevent maritime casualties and pollution to the marine environment. The strategic plan will contain goals with appropriate specific activities detailing priorities, assignments and target dates.

Principles

- The human element is a complex multi-dimensional issue that affects maritime safety and marine environmental protection. It involves the entire spectrum of human activities performed by ships' crews, shore based management, regulatory bodies, classification societies, shipyards, legislators, and other relevant parties.
- The Organization, Administrations, classification societies, shipping companies and relevant maritime parties need to cooperate to effectively address human element issues.
- The Organization, when developing regulations, should honour the seafarer by seeking and respecting the opinions of those that do the work at sea.
- Effective remedial action following maritime casualties requires a sound understanding of human element involvement in accident causation. This comes by the thorough investigation and systematic analysis of casualties for contributory factors and the causal chain of events.
- In the process of developing regulations, it should be recognized that adequate safeguards must be in place to ensure that a "single person error" will not cause an accident through the application of these regulations.
- Rules and regulations addressing the seafarers directly should be simple, clear and comprehensive.
- Crew performance is a function of individual capabilities, management policies, cultural factors, experience, training, job skills, work environment and countless other factors.
- Dissemination of information through effective communication is essential to sound management and operational decisions required to enhance maritime safety and marine environmental protection.